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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

NICOLAS ROLOVICH,

Plaintiff,

v.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY,

Defendant.

CASE NO: 2:22-CV-00319-TOR

DECLARATION OF NICHOLAS ROLOVICH

- 1. My name is Nicholas Rolovich. I am over the age of eighteen, competent to testify, and make this declaration based on my personal knowledge.
 - 2. I first met Fr. Paul Heric in July 2021.
- 3. Fr. Paul is a Catholic priest and was at the time the Chaplain of the St. Thomas More Catholic Cougs Student Center at WSU.
- 4. I was introduced to Fr. Paul through one of my football players, Liam Ryan, who encouraged me to talk to Fr. Paul and gave me his cell phone number.

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- 5. After I first reached out to Fr. Paul, our relationship developed through text messages, phone calls, and time spent together in person.
- 6. Our conversations covered a wide range of topics including my Catholic faith; how to understand my obligations as father, husband, and coach; how to be a spiritual leader for others; and how to help our athletes deal with adversity and loss.
- 7. Father Paul quickly became a friend and someone I looked to for advice and encouragement.
- 8. I credit Father Paul with helping me reconnect with the Catholic faith of my youth and grow closer to God.
- 9. As part of our conversations, I asked for Fr. Paul's spiritual direction and advice as I struggled with what to do in response to the pressure I was under to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
- 10. At first, Fr. Paul encouraged me to comply with WSU's wishes and get vaccinated.
- 11. However, as I continued to share my thoughts and concerns with Father Paul, he told me I needed to understand my decision about the vaccine in light of the Catholic Church's teaching on my religious obligation to form and then follow my conscience.

- 12. Fr. Paul shared with me selections from the Catholic Catechism on the conscience and encouraged me to spend time with them.
- 13. Fr. Paul also shared with me moral guidance related to COVID-19 vaccines developed by the Diocese of Spokane.
- 14. Fr. Paul encouraged me to talk to my bishop, Bishop Daly, about how my Catholic faith related to my decision on the COVID vaccination.
 - 15. At Fr. Paul's prompting, I reached out to and spoke with my bishop.
- 16. It was through Fr. Paul's counsel and my study of the materials he sent me that I came to understand that I had a religious obligation as a Catholic to follow my conscience and decline to take a COVID vaccination.
- 17. On several occasions, Fr. Paul encouraged me and prompted me to submit a request for religious exemption to WSU.
- 18. Fr. Paul continues to be a friend and mentor I rely on for spiritual direction and encouragement.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

EXECUTED this 23rd day of September 2024, at Novato, California.

Nick Rolovich

Nicholas Rolovich